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Identical letters dated 23 February 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to express my grave concern in light of an escalation of terrorism emanating from the Gaza Strip.

Earlier today — in a very disturbing development — terrorists in the Gaza Strip launched a Grad-type rocket at Be'er Sheva, the largest city in Southern Israel, which is home to more than 200,000 people. The rocket exploded in the backyard of a house, sending 10 civilians to the hospital and causing damage to several residences and vehicles. This marks the first time that a rocket has been fired from the Gaza Strip at the city of Be'er Sheva since the end of Operation Cast Lead in 2009.

The attack followed the launch of three mortars earlier in the day at a kibbutz in the Sha'ar Hanegev Regional Council. In addition, earlier today terrorists detonated an explosive device near the security fence in the northern Gaza Strip, attacking an IDF force that was performing routine activity in the area. Shortly afterwards, terrorists fired a mortar at this IDF force.

These attacks represent a clear escalation of terrorist activity emanating from the Gaza Strip. Since the beginning of 2011, we have witnessed the launch of some 20 rockets and 28 mortars from Gaza into southern Israel with the goal of targeting and terrorizing Israel's civilian population. Additionally, more than 12 explosive devices have been laid along the security fence in Gaza and detonated in attacks on IDF forces over the past two months.

As I highlighted in previous letters dated 9 February 2011, 1 February 2011, 21 December 2010 and 9 December 2010, such attacks constitute a clear violation of international law and must be addressed with the utmost seriousness.

Israel expects the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the international community to firmly condemn all of these attacks, which highlight the very real security challenges facing the Government and citizens of Israel on a daily basis.

Israel holds the terrorist entity in de facto control of Gaza fully responsible for all terrorist attacks emanating from the area. I would like to stress that Israel will not be able to remain indifferent to these violent attacks; it has exercised and will continue to exercise its right to self-defence, as appropriate, and will take all necessary measures to protect its citizens.

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I should be grateful if you would have this letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Meron **Reuben**
Ambassador
Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations